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SUBJECT: QUARTET ENVOYS MEETING: SUPPORT FOR ANNAPOLIS

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for Reasons 1.4, b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary. Quartet envoys expressed support November 1 for the Annapolis meeting and agreed to meet before it takes place. Envoys discussed rallying Arab support for the meeting. A/S Welch stressed that that meeting will not be an "end in itself," but rather a catalyst for negotiations. Envoys discussed the need to improve the situation on the ground, citing the deployment of NSF troops to Nablus, as well as the importance of public diplomacy efforts after Annapolis to demonstrate its achievements. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Participants:

U.S.: NEA A/S David Welch, Consul General Jake Walles, Ambassador Richard Jones, and USSC LTG Keith Dayton

EU: Ambassador Marc Otte, Advisor Rosemary Davis, and Advisor Maja Sverdrup

UN: Undersecretary General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe, Desk Officer for Political Affairs Lee O'Brien, UNSCO Head of Regional Affairs Robert Dann

Russian Federation: Ambassador Sergey Yakovlev and Embassy Political Counselor Alexey Skosyrev

From Now to Annapolis

¶3. (C) In a November 1 Jerusalem meeting, Quartet envoys expressed support for the Annapolis meeting and agreed to meet again to discuss its agenda. Welch stressed that the meeting is a top USG priority. Otte said he will generate support at the November 19 EU FM's meeting and Arab League support is also key. He suggested discussing a list of "issues within core issues" before the envoys meet. Asked how the EU can support USG efforts, Welch welcomed EU and UN efforts with the Egyptians and Gulf Arabs. Welch said the meeting will be at the Annapolis Naval Academy o/a November 26-28, but formal announcement of the dates and invitations will not be for some weeks. Otte said that the USG "must be sure to invite all who need to be there and not leave anyone behind."

Annapolis Meeting

¶4. (C) Welch emphasized that Annapolis will not be an "end in itself," but rather a continuation of efforts to resolve the conflict, and noted that the subsequent negotiations will be the first in many years. Otte praised Secretary Rice for defining a resolution to the conflict as in "America's interest" and called for the EU to do the same.

¶5. (C) Welch said obligations of the parties under Phase 1 of the Road Map will be the working agenda ahead of the Annapolis meeting. Welch said the USG has not sketched out a timetable for negotiations. Otte said the conference should legitimize the bilateral track, address a comprehensive approach that includes the international community, and start permanent status negotiations.

Results on the Ground:

Nablus, Gaza

¶6. (C) Welch said Annapolis should be linked to confidence building measures and improvements on the ground. He said the combination of a joint document, steps on the ground, and the start of permanent status negotiations will move the political process. Specifically, Welch addressed the importance of developing strong PA governance and institutions, including PASF operations in Nablus. LTG Dayton added that an NSF battalion would deploy to Nablus to begin a major security operation. After the deployment is underway, the Consul General said the USG will inaugurate economic assistance projects in Nablus. Otte said the EU plans to rebuild West Bank police stations and can explore rapid assistance for Nablus as well.

¶7. (C) Welch said the USG has agreed to the World Bank request for help with the Beit Lahiya sewage project in Gaza. UN U/SYG Pascoe said a GOI-PA agreement to open the Gaza crossings is needed. Otte said the Quartet should discourage GoI operations in Gaza.

After Annapolis

JERUSALEM 00002342 002 OF 002

¶8. (C) Welch said many challenges lie ahead, including the rejectionists' efforts, high popular expectations, and the upcoming Lebanese elections. Otte urged public diplomacy after the meeting to demonstrate to Israelis, Palestinians, and the international community that "yes, this is worth the effort and money" and to articulate the process' direction.

¶9. (U) A/S Welch cleared on this cable.

WALLES